

PLANT MICROPROPAGATION AND GERMPLASM STORAGE

Abstract of the Disclosure

The present invention relates to a method for the *in vitro* preparation of starting materials for micropropagation and/or storage of germplasm, comprising the steps of contacting plant material with a microorganism that induces fasciation and/or one or more fasciation-inducing factors derived from the microorganism or derived from the infected and/or fasciated tissue; developing leafy galls or shoot outgrowths on the plant material; and isolating the leafy galls or shoot outgrowths as the starting materials. This method may be used for the *in vitro* micropropagation of plants, which further comprises the steps of eliminating or inactivating the microorganism that induces fasciation and/or the one or more fasciation-related factors derived from the microorganism or derived from the infected and/or fasciated tissue; culturing the leafy gall or shoot outgrowths in or on one or more suitable culture media to allow shoot and root development for obtaining plantlets; and transferring the plantlets thus obtained, optionally after acclimatization, to conventional growing conditions to obtain regenerated plants. The method may also be used for the preservation of plants or germplasm, which is further characterized by the step of storing the leafy galls or shoot outgrowths under growth limiting conditions.